

common-sense measures to help States and water systems prevent drinking water contamination problems in the first place. It also authorizes for the first time the Drinking Water State Revolving Funds that I first proposed in 1993. These Funds will provide the resources for drinking water infrastructure that will help hundreds of communities to protect their people from harmful contaminants.

Regrettably, the Congress failed to pass this legislation prior to the August 1 deadline, so the \$725 million of previously appropriated funds are no longer available for the Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and have been transferred to the Clean Water Program. I urge the Congress to act promptly to correct this problem and to restore these monies to the Drinking Water State Revolving Funds as soon as possible.

The Act is in several respects a model for responsible reinvention of regulations. It replaces an inflexible approach with the authority to act on contaminants of greatest risk and to analyze costs and benefits, while retaining public

health as the paramount value. It embraces principles of pollution prevention and a cost-effective, community-based approach for ensuring drinking water safety. It affirms the right of all Americans to know about the quality of their drinking water and the potential threats to its safety.

The consensus that has been achieved on this Act shows how strong protection of the health and environment of the American people can be achieved through partnerships with State and local governments and affected communities. The result achieved today by the Administration and Congress will give the American people confidence for years to come in the safety of their drinking water.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
August 6, 1996.

NOTE: S. 1316, approved August 6, was assigned Public Law No. 104-182.

## Statement on Signing the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1997

August 6, 1996

Today I have signed into law H.R. 3603, the "Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1997."

For the upcoming fiscal year, the Act provides \$13.1 billion in discretionary budget authority for important nutrition, food safety, and rural development programs, and \$40.3 billion for mandatory programs such as the Food Stamp program, the Child Nutrition program and the Commodity Credit Corporation. In addition, the Act provides urgently needed supplemental funds for the current fiscal year in two vital areas.

First, the Act provides \$12 million in FY 1996 funds to support and enhance the ability of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to investigate the appalling incidents of church burning that have disturbed and angered Americans across the Nation. As I said when I spoke to this issue in Greeleyville, South Carolina in

June, we will do everything we can to bring those responsible for these acts to justice. And so I appreciate the timely action by the Congress in providing this funding in the first available appropriations bill.

Second, the Act includes \$32 million in FY 1996 emergency funds for farmers who have been hurt by natural disasters, particularly those in the Southwest suffering from the prolonged drought and those in the Southeast affected by Hurricane Bertha. These funds will support \$100 million in low-interest direct loans. I hereby designate all of these funds as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

For fiscal year 1997, I am particularly pleased that the Act includes my request for increased funds for the Food Safety Inspection Service. On July 6, I announced a sweeping reform of the meat and poultry inspection system, which

has not been upgraded in 90 years. This investment will revolutionize the way we ensure the safety of American meat and poultry.

The Act also provides significant increases in rural development programs, to improve the quality of life in rural America and to help diversify the rural economy. In addition, the Act includes much of my proposal to create a Rural Development Performance Partnership, which will provide greater flexibility to tailor Federal assistance to local needs, reflecting my Administration's belief that there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution to the challenges facing rural areas.

I am concerned, however, that the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program is funded at \$150 million below my request. I am disappointed that the Congress failed to provide my requested increase for the WIC program in order to reach a full participation level of 7.5 million women, infants, and children.

Finally, I note that \$69.1 million of valuable agricultural research funding has been earmarked for unrequested buildings and facilities. In the Statement of Managers accompanying the Bill, the conferees have, however, expressed their intent to make FY 1997 the last year in which they earmark research funds for such purposes. It is my hope and expectation that the Congress will hold to that intent.

On balance, this is a good bill that will provide funding for important nutrition, food safety, and rural development needs as well as providing a strong boost for two immediate priorities.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
August 6, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 3603, approved August 6, was assigned Public Law No. 104-180.

## Statement on Signing the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act Amendments of 1996

*August 6, 1996*

Today, I am pleased to sign into law S. 1757, the "Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act Amendments of 1996." This legislation would extend for 3 years the authorization of appropriations under the Act.

During the 25 years since its enactment, the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act has made a crucial difference in the lives and futures of Americans with developmental disabilities and their families. Through this Act, Federal funds support the development and operation of developmental disabilities councils, protection and advocacy activities, university-affiliated programs, and projects of national significance. This crucial investment has provided the structure to assist people with developmental disabilities to reach their maximum potential.

When first conceived by President Kennedy, Dr. Elizabeth Boggs, and others, the primary emphasis of developmental disabilities programs was on access to institutional facilities. Today, the focus is on helping people to obtain the support they need to make choices about how to live, particularly in family or community set-

tings. The developmental disabilities programs emphasize fundamental system change, including legal services and advocacy and capacity building at the State and local levels. They also continue to spur progress and create opportunities in the everyday lives of children and adults with developmental and other significant disabilities in ways unimaginable a generation ago.

Beginning in the mid-seventies, individuals with disabilities and their families began to work for, and gain passage of, key Federal and State legislation regarding educational access, barrier-free design, and employment. The resulting legislation has helped to open doors that had been slammed shut for decades. It was once common for people with disabilities to be denied access to community schools, swimming pools, banks, restaurants, and even to the voting booth. Today, these actions are not only illegal, but would be considered beyond the pale by the American people.

Americans with disabilities are helping to redefine what it means to have a disability in America and what it means to be a full, contributing citizen. I am pleased to support continu-